



DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Dale J Schmidt Sheriff Scott Mittelstadt Chief Deputy

LOCK YOUR CAR DOORS

This month my message to all citizens is very simple. When your car is unattended, even if it is in your driveway, lock your car doors. Many people say the car is in my driveway, why should I lock the doors. It's inconvenient and what if I need to go back to get something out of it? If they are going to break in anyway, I don't want to have to replace the window on top of what they take. Believe me when I tell you, that by not locking your doors, you open yourself up to a much higher risk of theft.

Sure, some thieves will smash the window and take what they want. I myself was the victim of a smash and grab when I was in college. However, the facts remain that most thieves don't want to go to the trouble of breaking your window to get your stuff. They look for unlocked vehicles with valuables inside of them as it is easier and makes less noise. I can't tell you how many times through the years we have taken reports of thefts from vehicles and thefts of vehicles and found out that the only reason the victim was selected was because they left their vehicle unlocked in their own driveway.

So when this happens, what follows? You find your privacy has been violated and your property is stolen. You call the police to file a report and the officer takes photos, collects pertinent evidence and writes a detailed report of the incident. You have to dig through your files to find model numbers and serial numbers if you have them and you have to document the items that were stolen for us. We then have to process the report and enter the evidence and photos into our evidence room to be processed. We may then have to process that evidence looking for fingerprints, shoe impressions and other evidence that may have been left behind and follow up on leads by interviewing witnesses and suspects. Then, if we do locate a suspect and put the case together, we have to prepare the case for the prosecutors and potentially go to court to testify, many times costing the taxpayers overtime dollars to bring the investigating officers in while off duty.

You might need to file an insurance claim if the theft exceeds your deductible, get quotes to have it replaced and certainly will have dollars out of your own pocket to replace what was lost. Finally, there is the time that you have spent as well as the time of our investigators which following this 5 minute or less crime will add up to hours upon hours. Think about all the time, money, hassle for you and resources that could have been saved had you simply locked your car.

Your house, garage, and other outbuildings are no different. Yes we should be able to leave our property unsecure without worrying about criminals stealing from you. The reality is we just can't live that way any longer and we need to be proactive about protecting our property. Lock your doors, your windows and secure your property.

By simply locking your car doors and the doors to your buildings it will help us all toward keeping Dodge County a safe and enjoyable place to live, work and visit.